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II, No. 1

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INTEGRAL Yoga

Monthly Issue

A SACRED LIFE

Article by Sri Swami
Satchidananda

YOGA AND MEDICINE

How yoga can help
control blood pressure

THE PATH

The basic require-
ments of the
spiritual path;
Article by
David
Friedman-Rast, OSB

YOGA AND ART

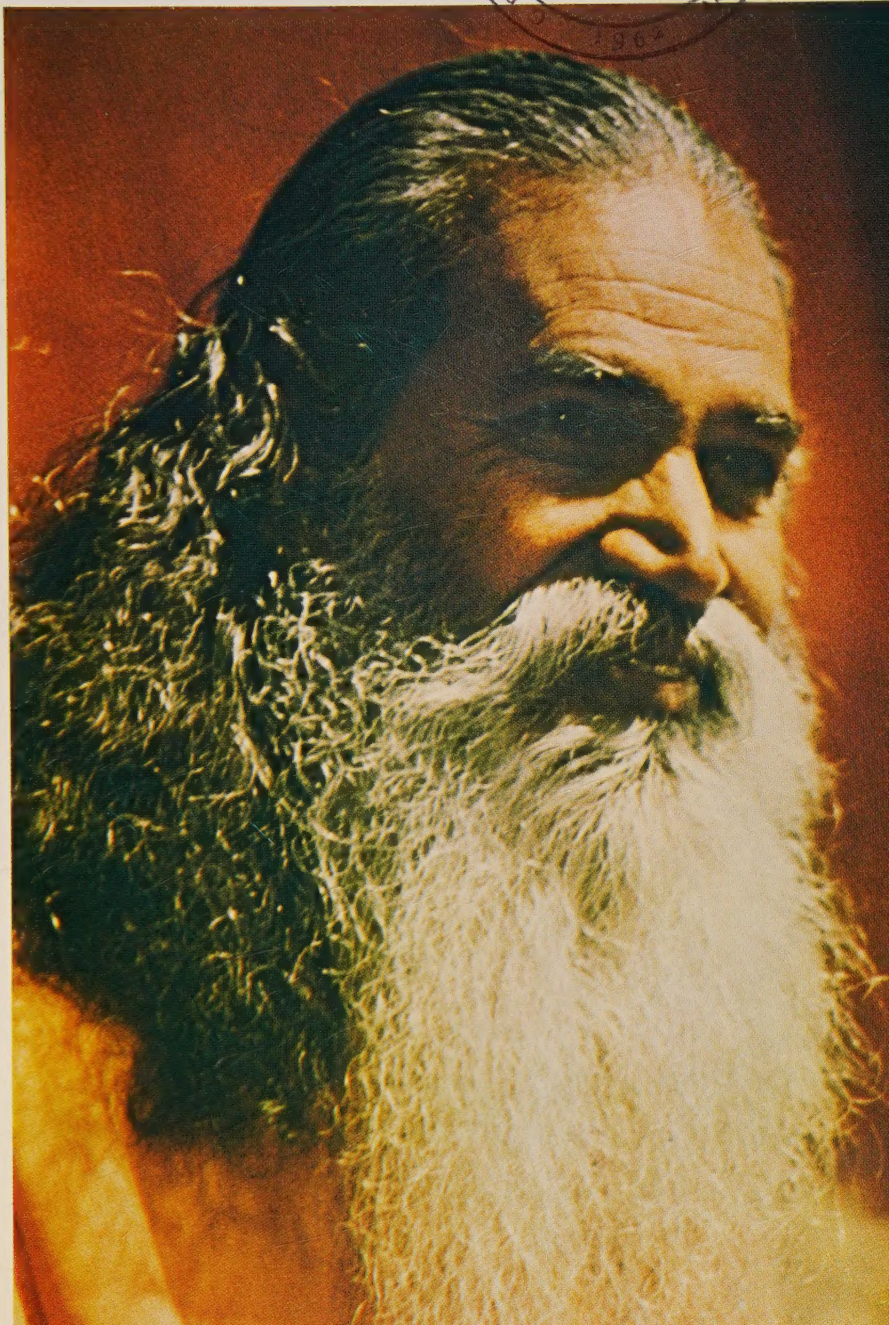
Interview with
Rodolfo
(Anjan) Mishra

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON MEDITATION

Swami Satchidananda
answers questions
on various aspects
of meditation

THE MEANING OF THE GITA

A new analysis of the
essential message
of the Bhagavad
Gita, by Sri Swami
Satchidananda



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It is with great joy
that we celebrate
the 61st Jayanthi of
our beloved master
Sri Swami Satchidananda



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INTEGRAL Yoga

Contents

LEAD A DEDICATED LIFE

Jayanthi (birthday) message from Sri Swami Satchidananda.....3

YOGA AND MEDICINE

*How Yoga can help in the problem of high blood pressure,
Swami Amritananda Ma, M.D.....6*

YOGA AND THE PATH

*Talk by Br. David Steindl-Rast on the basic requirements
of the spiritual path.....9*

YOGA AND ART

An interview with artist Rodolfo (Niranjan) Mishaan.....13

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*Swami Satchidananda answers questions on concentration
and meditation.....14*

THE MEANING OF THE GITA

*An incisive analysis of the essential message of the
Bhagavad Gita, by Sri Swami Sivananda.....16*

LOOK UP AT A STAR!

*A prose-poem of wonder and discovery, by Anandi Friendlich,
illustrated by Sushila Sollecito.....18*

NEWS OF SWAMIJI

*A report on Swami Satchidananda's first visit to South
America, plus reports on his participation in the World
Vegetarian Congress, in a special program at the United
Nations, and other travels and programs here in the
United States.....20*

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INTEGRAL YOGA: A magazine of the Integral Yoga Institutes. Vol. VII, No. 1; January 1975.
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Published by Office of Sri Gurudev (OSG), International Headquarters of the Integral Yoga
Institutes, at Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville, Box 108, Pomfret Center, Connecticut 06259,
U.S.A.



Letters

Dear Friends,

I want to thank you all for the really profound effect that the recent retreat has had on my life. It seems that everything has come into focus for me since then. The retreat seems to have set up a groove and, so far, I have been able to stay in it.

I used to go the IYI 3 or 4 times a week for Hatha classes, and do a sort of on-again, off-again meditation whenever I was not too tired to get up before work in the morning. Also, although I had been observing a no-meat, no-fish, no-eggs diet for about six months, my digestion had nevertheless been in more or less of an uproar for much of this time. This is because I had been eating a lot of junk food, at irregular hours, especially late at night. In addition, I had been diverting my energies by trying to follow not only the Integral Yoga practices, but also those of another Yoga teacher at the same time.

Since the retreat, I have been getting up regularly at or before dawn every morning, doing an hour of chanting, pranayama and meditation, followed by a full morning Hatha at home, eating very light for breakfast, with the main meal, usually uncooked, at lunch and fruit for dinner.

All the practices are much improved. After almost a year, I have finally become able to do the headstand. My digestion is tremendously improved, and I now am feeling better at age 41 - both physically and mentally - than ever before in my life. In addition, I have gotten into doing an evening of Karma Yoga each week at the Institute. I've also decided to stick to the Integral Yoga practices, and no longer go to the other teacher.

All this is a direct result of the retreat - how can I thank you enough? It certainly was a beautiful experience, executed by beautiful people.

Thank you so much.
L.J.

The next letter is from a woman who was our guest at the Ashram

Beloved friends,

Tonight I'll be leaving to take a train back to North Carolina. It is, of course, exceedingly hard to say goodbye. You have all been so loving that for the first time in my life I know the meaning of the word "sister" and "brother." A great point of sadness in my childhood was that I had no brothers and sisters, so I've waited a long while in this life to understand what it's like. Thank you for finally fulfilling that longing.



Lead a Dedicated Life

The following talk was given by Sri Swamiji at his 61st Jayanthi (birthday) celebration last year, which was held on December 22 at the Wilshire-Ebell Theatre in Los Angeles and attended by more than 1300 persons.

I want to thank you all for having me. As I always say, every time I come to Los Angeles I see the lost angels here. It's a city of angels. So in your midst even an ordinary man can be a wonderful person. So I sincerely thank you all, the beautiful angels, all those who have come to celebrate this birthday.

If this is going to be the birthday celebration, I would prefer it every day - because it is bringing everybody together. This is the essence of all the religions. This is the essence of Yoga, coming together. There is that unity in us always.

Sometimes we hear people talk about bringing unity. There's no need to bring unity. It is already there. It's only a matter

of recognizing. There is already union. There is already communion. We are never separated. If ever we separate, we collapse.

So it's only a matter of knowing. That is why it is called knowledge. Just to know. You don't need to do anything. Just know that you are eternally united. Know that you are eternally peaceful. Know that you are permanently happy. This is the keynote behind all the teachings. When we forget that, we look for that peace, we look for that joy, outside. So knowing the Self, knowing the peace within, is the essential goal of our life.

Seeing is Believing

I am not going to take much time now in giving a sermon. Already we have heard enough. But I would just like to present the underlying principle behind all the teachings in a nutshell.

As I said, we are peaceful, we are joyful. Always under all circumstances. That is our real nature. But the unfortunate thing is, we cannot see it. Why? You,

being the subject, can never see yourself. If you are going to see yourself, you should become the object also. The subject can never become the object.

But still, seeing is believing. So the only way to see is through a reflecting surface - just as with our own faces. I say "our own" faces, because we all have faces, but we have never seen our own faces. What we see in the mirror is nothing but the reflection of our face. So we have never seen our faces, but we can see the reflection. In the same way, being peaceful and joyful always, if we want to see ourselves as peaceful and joyful we should see it through a mirror.

The Secret

That is the secret behind all the so-called spiritual practices. It doesn't matter what you do, what technique you follow. It can be a Bhakti practice - the devotional approach - or self-analysis, or service to the humanity, it doesn't matter. Whatever you do should keep the mind clean. It should keep the mind straight. It should keep it steady. If that is achieved by any of your day-to-day practices, you can call it Yoga. You can call it a spiritual practice. If you are not going to achieve that, if you are going to disturb your mind - even in the name of spiritual practice - know that it is not spiritual. It's not yogic.

So there is no particular label for the methods, for what you do. You cannot label a particular practice as a yogic practice. Everything becomes a

yogic practice if it helps you in keeping the mind clean, steady and straight. That's what we should always remember.

And, fortunately, we have been blessed with such a mirror. Everybody has a built-in mirror. What is that mirror? Our own mind. Our mind is a mirror given by the Creator. We came with that. So to get a clear reflection we should have a clear mirror. A clean mirror, a straight mirror and a steady mirror. The mirror shouldn't be dirty. The mirror shouldn't be crooked. The mirror shouldn't be shaky. Only then can we see our reflection well.

The Source of Disturbance

Now this brings another question. Is the mind always shaky, dirty, crooked? Is it built that way? The answer is no. Having been born with us, the mind is always pure, straight and steady but we allow it to get disturbed. Then what disturbs the mind? What makes the mind unsteady? All our wrong desires, wrong acts.

In other words, anything that would disturb the mind is a wrong act, is unyogic and is not religious. This is why all scriptures have their foundation stones, such as the Ten Commandments, which are similar to the Dasa Sheela of Buddhism, the Yama and Niyama of the Yoga philosophy. In that, they all agree. Keep the mind clean by following all the Ten Commandments.

But we can narrow that still more. We don't even need to be practicing the Ten Commandments one by one. Because the reason that we do not follow the commandments lies in one thing.

What is that? It is the selfishness, the selfishness of the individual. It is the feeling of "I," "mine," that makes me lie, makes me steal, makes me hurt somebody. I want to achieve something, even at the cost of somebody's happiness. All the Ten commandments are violated because of this selfishness.

Lead a Dedicated Life

So if we bring this beautiful quality of selflessness, dedication, into our life, we need not do anything else. And we need not preach to any other things except the human beings. Because all other species practice that already. The lights shine, not for themselves. The flowers bloom, not for themselves. The incense sticks burn, and become ash, not for themselves. The entire nature leads a dedicated life. That is the law. Sacrifice is the law of life. All of nature follows the higher command. Sacrifice. Are we ready to do that? If we do that, we will keep our minds clean, calm, and steady.

So in simple words, let us

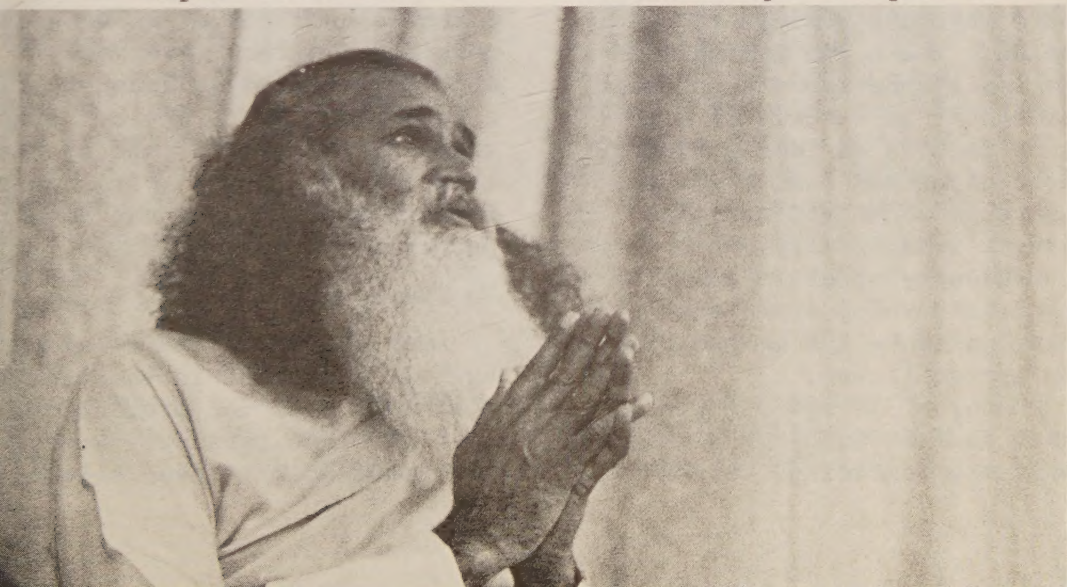
all learn to live a dedicated life. Let us brush aside selfishness in any way. Then nothing in this world can affect our mind. Nothing can bring us disappointment, worry, anxiety, fear, hatred, jealousy.

Just two lines from the Bhagavad Gita are enough to guide our lives. We all want to be happy. But without peace, where is joy, where is happiness? How can you get peace?

*Adweshtaa sarvabhootaanaam
maitraha karuna eva cha;
Nirmamo nirahankaaras samaduhkhasukhah kashamee.
(12:12)*

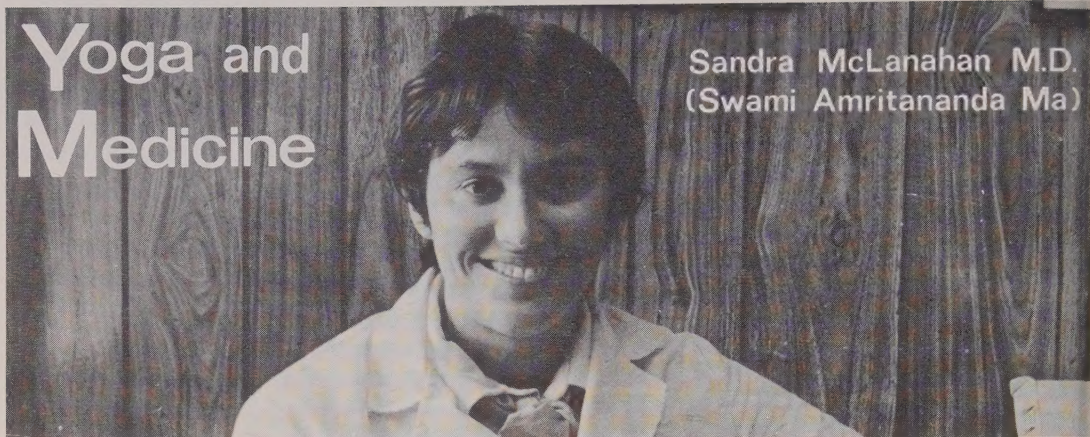
Just these two lines. "Only by dedication can we find peace." And only by finding peace can we realize our true nature. Once we realize that true nature, there's no birth or death, there's no celebration.

But still, we can celebrate the birth of that knowledge. So let this birthday be an excuse to celebrate - it doesn't matter. And let it bring the birth of that knowledge into your hearts.



Yoga and Medicine

Sandra McLanahan M.D.
(Swami Amritananda Ma)



High Blood Pressure and Deep Relaxation

Question: I often suffer from headaches, tiredness, and the feeling of being "over the hill." I have been told this may be due to high blood pressure. What is high blood pressure? Is it dangerous? And are there any yogic practices that can help?

High blood pressure (hypertension) is a rise in pressure within the small arterioles, causing the resting (or diastolic) pressure in blood vessels to be raised. The cause for this is not well understood at present, though it is associated with such factors as family history, overweight and diabetes. But there is much evidence that stress is a primary factor - chronically stressed animals tend to develop hypertension. Many patients are helped simply by tranquilizers.

Thus, it is not surprising that the incidence of high blood pressure is rising. Currently,

approximately one in every six adults suffers from hypertension. The reason this is such a cause of concern is that where high blood pressure is present, the possibility of heart attack or stroke is greatly increased.

High blood pressure probably contributes to this effect by accelerating the process of arteriosclerosis, the aging of the arteries into hardness. To prevent this is the main reason why high blood pressure should be detected and treated as soon as possible. In fact, everyone should be tested at least yearly as there may be no obvious symptoms for many years, and by that time damage of such volume as to produce heart attack may have occurred.

Treatment

Diet, exercise and relaxation are all important in the treatment (and also the prevention) of high blood pressure. First, the right weight (even slightly

low) needs to be maintained. And because salt raises the pressure, it should be eliminated from the table and the cooking. Spices like thyme, oregano, basil, dill and cumin can be used to help the food taste good without salt. Even black pepper in large amounts can be an offender.

In general, a vegetarian diet is very helpful. Vegetarians have been found to have lower blood pressure on the average (in fact, the standards may have to be rewritten for them). In addition, vegetarians have lower cholesterol levels in their blood. (Cholesterol levels are correlated with higher heart attack rates in the same manner as hypertension.)

Finally, birth control pills may raise blood pressure; therefore, they should be avoided by those with the condition or whose family has such a history.

As for exercise, recent research has shown that yogic practices lower blood pressure. All the asanas (postures) are helpful for the tense person with high blood pressure, with the exception of the head stand. The head stand might cause undue strain on the small cerebral arteries in a person suffering from hypertension.)

One of the great values of the yogic postures is that they can be done without strain by persons of any age. Unlike many normal exercises, they tone the body without building up muscle fatigue. As a result, they release tension from the system, rather than create it.

Writing in the official jour-

nal of the American Congress and Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Dr. L. Huddleston concludes that the Yoga exercises "not only improve flexibility of the trunk and extremities, and increase muscle strength and coordination; they help develop grace and poise of the entire body, reduce nervous tension and establish a sense of well being."

This seems to get directly at the level of stress that may be the original cause for the high blood pressure. In fact, levels of stress hormones in the blood are much lower in Yoga practitioners, and remain lower when stressed, as compared with control groups.

Deep Relaxation

But perhaps the most important practice in Yoga, as regards high blood pressure, is Deep Relaxation. Writing in The Lancet, Dr. R. Russell reported his work done with a group of patients. Eighty percent showed improvement in blood pressure readings.

Deep Relaxation consists in lying on the back (Savasana) on a flat mat or rug. Feet are kept a foot or so apart, arms a little away from the body, palms up. To begin, a few slow deep breaths are taken. Then each part of the body in turn is squeezed tightly for five seconds, then dropped like a stringless puppet. This process starts with each leg, then each arm, the buttocks, stomach, etc., ending with the face.

After this squeezing and releasing, the mind goes over all the parts in the same order, tel-

ling each part to relax without moving. It is a matter of using your mind to teach each part of your body what it feels like to be really relaxed.

Once the body is completely relaxed, you draw the awareness to the breath, and without controlling it in any way, observe its flow. The breath will become very slow and calm. Then you can draw the awareness inward, to the mind itself, letting go of any worries or anxieties. When the mind is relaxed, you remain in a state of awareness, in a feeling of peace deep within.

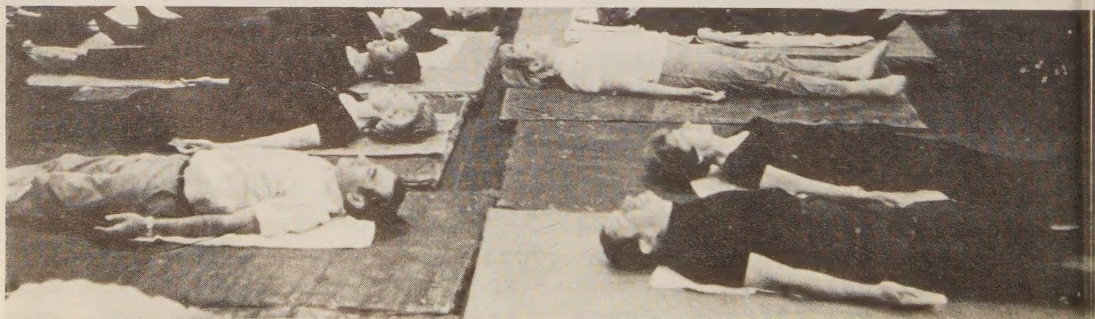
This is the key to Deep Relaxation. It is *conscious* relaxation - of the body, the breath and the mind - rather than sleep. That is why 15 minutes of Deep Relaxation is as restful and rejuvenating as a couple hours of normal sleep.

The benefits of Deep Relaxation can't really be conveyed by scientific data alone. You need to experience the total peace it brings. Yet it is a very scientifically designed exercise. By lying in Savasana, all the muscle groups are at rest. The back muscles particularly can let go of their straining to keep the vertebrae in line against gravity. The breath becomes calm, and

the mind, released from the busyness of daily activity, but remaining alert, can assume a meditative state. Much scientific evidence supports the conclusion that the practice of meditation itself lowers blood pressure.

Deep Relaxation can be done by a person of any age. Care should be taken not to strain when the squeezing is done. For disabled persons who are not comfortable lying on their backs on the floor, it can be done on a bed or in a chair. It should be done at least three times daily. And breathing exercises (pranayama) could follow these sessions for maximum benefit.

All of these yogic practices offer help in getting to the source of the problem of hypertension. One of the simple but perfect examples that Swamiji often uses is that of the automobile "lube job." To lubricate a car, the old grease is removed by forcing it out with new grease under pressure. We are all in need of a "lube job." By doing these yogic practices we can force out the old tensions and toxins, keep the blood vessels in a relaxed state and better withstand all stresses. We will then be able to return to our true state of ease and peace.



Faith and the Path



by Brother David Steindl-Rast, O.S.B.

Brother David Steindl-Rast, OSB, is an old friend of Sri Swamiji. The following is an excerpt from a talk that Br. David gave at last summer's Annhurst retreat.

Thank you very much, all of you, for inviting me. I was considering very carefully what I should speak about this morning, and I think I should speak about the spiritual path. That would give us a chance to touch upon the question of faith too.

First of all, I believe that there is only one path. When we speak about the path, we should keep in mind that there is only one path, and everyone who is going is on that one path. It may look as if people were going in different directions; but as long as they are going, they are still on the path.

I have tried to find the simplest characteristics of the path, and I come up with two. One is inclusiveness and the

other is narrowness. If your notion of the path is inclusive enough - I don't mean just a mental notion, I mean your whole approach - if your approach is inclusive enough to include every other path, then you are on the one path.

That's really all that needs to be said about it. Wherever you come across anything that is exclusive in your path, well, that doesn't mean that the path is wrong, it just means that to that extent you still haven't completely discovered your own path.

The Narrowness is the Path

As for narrowness, when we are really alert to the guidance that leads us on the path, we find ourselves again and again confronted with what we call straits. It is tough; it is difficult. In the Christian context we say it is the Cross. "He who takes up my Cross and follows

Me is my disciple." That is what is meant by narrowness.

You see immediately that this narrowness is by no means a contradiction to inclusiveness. It is not one of those paradoxes that sometimes you find in the spiritual way. These two really come from two different directions. The narrowness of the path means that if it is truly your path - the one meant for you - you will have to find it narrow sooner or later.

That is very important, because if we are not alert to the fact that the very narrowness is the path, we are apt to say, "Oh well, this is getting too tough; this must not be my path. I'd better try something else." The more difficult it gets - in the right sense - the more truly you can be sure you are on the path.

Of course, there is also a danger of turning this into some sort of idol and saying, "I always do the more difficult thing." That would be just as wrong as saying, "I always do the easier thing." There's no difference between the two. You do what's right, not because it's easy or because it's hard. You do it because you are alert to the guidance that comes to you.

Faith

Now I come to something which may at first sight seem specifically Christian - or Biblical, I should rather say. But when you listen very carefully, you will see that we speak about a reality which is quite universal: faith. Faith and the path are inseparable from one another. Faith is that dynamism of going on the

path. Faith is what makes it possible for you to go on.

Now, you see immediately that faith in this sense must mean something other than believing something. Faith *includes* believing in something, because life includes believing something. But the emphasis on believing something, which we have connected with faith in recent Christian tradition, is lopsided, even dangerous, because in the full concept, faith is not primarily believing something, but is primarily trusting someone. Faith is not giving your signature to a list of beliefs and dogmas. That will come in eventually - but what faith is from the very start is courageous trust. It may start simply with trust in life, and eventually open its way toward trust in the Source of all life.

Complexity and Simplicity

I'd like to share something which I have only recently experienced - or rather I've come to formulate it recently. So I like to talk about it; it's new to me and exciting to me.

All of you, I'm sure, are struggling for simplicity of life. But there's a way of settling for simplicity that is simplistic, a kind of childish oversimplification. You haven't really dared to face to complexity of life. That's the danger. And that's where my recent experience started. You suddenly discover how incredibly complex life is.

I had always realized that external life is tremendously complex. The more you become alert

to things, the more you realize how complex they are. And I'm not even talking about natural things - just about something like switching on the light. If you ever switch on a light, with a minimum degree of awareness, you would just be staggered by the complexity with which you are in touch. Not only the people who work in those generators but the people who built the switch. The men who did the wiring in the building. The men who mined the metal. And this is just on the human level. It is just the thinnest crust of complexity on this incredibly complex universe.

I have been aware for a long time of this outer complexity. But you become aware, one day, of your inner complexity - of what has to happen when you take a piece of bread, what has to happen in your body so that you don't die from that little piece of bread. A hundred thousand little processes have to go on within your body to digest that piece of bread, over which you have absolutely no control and which you have never understood and which you never will understand. And that's supposedly you!

I haven't even spoken about the psyche and the unconscious and all the complexities we find there. In other words, what I call "me" and what I experience in living is somehow at the crossroads of that external and that internal complexity in which I am immersed. And somehow I can find simplicity there. I can find a still point there.

I'm not quite clear how this

happens, but it's much more important *that* it happens than that I understand *how* it happens. I do understand that it has something to do with finding order, finding harmony in your world.

The Courage to Let Go

It's a tremendous thing that every time we venture out, we find more and more complex order. When we investigate that complexity - in biology or in chemistry or even in psychology - we find that it is a structured complexity. It is harmony. It is something like music, which includes discords, but the discords are somehow part of a greater harmony and make the harmony more interesting and complex and more beautiful.

Every time we look out, we find order. And then comes the moment when something new is thrown at us. For instance, in science, new findings. Or in life, new experiences. They suddenly seem to shatter the order we have established, to put the order we are familiar with into crisis. And then comes the point where all spiritual life begins, where you begin to move on the path or not. That's the moment of decision. Because that is the moment where either we hang on for dear life (which is death) to that order we have already found, or we let go in the courageous trust that we will find a greater order. And that letting go is possible only through faith. That is what faith is: the courage to let go.

We practice that from the beginning in our spiritual life in little things. But it gets more

and more difficult as we go on, and that is the narrowness of the path; that difficulty, those straits in which we get because we have to let go and let go and let go. And the further we go, the more everything seems to be chaos. Yet we trust that through this chaos we will find order.

The Courage to Be Yourself

Nobody can give you a guarantee. Nobody can say, "Yes, you will pull through. Yes, there is order there." No, the only thing you have to fall back in is your courage and also your memory - your memory that every time you did that in the past, every time you died, you were born to a greater, more comprehensive order.

So the path is really this going on from harmony to greater harmony, always through periods of disharmony and discord, or from life to life, always through periods of death. That is the path; and the dynamism of that is faith, is courage.

So you need faith. You need faith in yourself, in that inner voice, the voice of circumstance that tells you what is the right thing for you and the courage to do it, to really enter into it. And in the last analysis, really, the courage to be yourself.

Question by a retreatant: When you are on the part of the path which is inclusive, and you hear a voice, but you are not completely sure - is there some way to tell?

That's a very important question and it is really the ques-

tion of self-deception. "How can I be sure I am not deceiving myself?" The answer is, you can't.

That is what faith is all about - that you trust and you go on even though you are not absolutely sure that you are not deceiving yourself; you trust that it will fall in place eventually if you go on trying not to deceive yourself. The wrong answer would be, "Well, since I can't be sure that I'm not deceiving myself, let's go on deceiving myself." No, that's not the answer. The answer is, "I can't ever really be sure." Only when you feel, "Now I'm sure that I'm not deceiving myself" - that's the one moment you can be sure that you are deceiving yourself.

At any other time, you are suspended precisely in that vacuum that is necessary for the path. Otherwise there wouldn't be anywhere to go. You'd just be stuck. It's the space that makes room for doubt and only in that space of doubt can faith move.

There is no other way. There is no other space for faith, except doubt. Doubt is the vacuum into which faith moves. And the doubt, "Am I not deceiving myself?" is the vacuum into which my total dedication not to deceive myself - trusting that God will help me and teach me - moves.

That's as much of an answer as I can give, because the question is an existential one. It is not a matter of answering it so that you can write it down and take it home with you. The answer must be something that challenges you to live it out.

Yoga and Art



RUDOLFO (NIRANJAN) MISHAAN

The Artist as Instrument

Rodolfo Mishaan is an artist for whom art is a means of expressing spiritual truth. Born in Guatemala, he now lives in New York City, and has received many international awards.

Rodolfo met Sri Swamiji more than a year ago and it marked a turning point in his life. *"With Swamiji I saw this extraordinary being. So I said to myself, you have to let this light flow through you, to capture this beautiful feeling. If I can capture Swamiji's love in a painting, it will be broadcasting for generations to come."*

He added, *"Swamiji gave me the name Niranjan. That means without color, the clear one."*

Though his name means 'without color,' Niranjan often employs both vivid colors and rare metals in his paintings. Working with Swamiji, he executed the painting of the Yantra which is over the altar at Satchidananda Ashram. Part of the special effect of the Yantra is due, he explains, to the subtle effect of the undercoating. *"Anyone who meditates on the Yantra will receive energy from the metals and colors underneath."*

Although Niranjan has always dealt with spiritual themes, his

work has taken a new form recently. He has begun to paint sages and saints such as Ramana Maharshi and Sri Anandamayi Ma. And at present he is working on a painting of Swamiji, *"to capture this beautiful feeling."*

Summing up the change in himself as an artist, he said, *"A true artist is an instrument. At the beginning all artists have big egos. The artist has to be impassioned to survive. And if he is not enlightened, he thinks, 'I am doing this. This is my work.' But Yoga teaches you to be the instrument."*



Sri Anandamayi Ma.

Questions and Answers

On Meditation

The following are some questions asked of Sri Swamiji.

How often should a beginner meditate?

As often as possible. And do everything as a meditation also. Meditation is a continuous process. Everything should be done with a meditative attitude.

And as a specific practice, you should do it at least twice a day, if not more. At least morning and evening, but the more the better. And at least for 10 or 15 minutes, anyway. You can increase up to one or two hours.

At the same time, don't make it a burden or an ordeal or it will frighten your mind. If the mind gets frightened, whenever you think of meditation you'll feel a headache coming on and you won't want to do anything.

So don't force; gently train the mind. It's something like steel: it bends but it's strong. You should bend to be strong.

Why do my eyes flutter when concentrating on the third eye? How can I stop them?

You're trying to focus your mind on one thing and because your eyes are used to seeing outside things, they get a little agitated. But if you continue practicing, it will go away.

At the same time, I'd like to say, do not strain your eyes.

You don't need to roll the eyeballs up in order to concentrate on the third eye. You can do it, but you shouldn't have even the slightest strain in doing that. Otherwise, you might hurt the optic nerves.

Instead, think of the spot between the eyebrows. Bring your mind there. The more your awareness goes to that, the more the eyeballs turn by themselves, without your even knowing or doing that. Then there won't be any strain.

Why are mantrams kept secret?

Well, it's not that you can not say it to anyone, but normally we don't. Why? It's not because it's a sin or anything like that. In fact, many mantrams are right in the chants we all do together. But normally, if we keep on repeating something freely, openly, we seem to lose respect for it. Anything that is repeated very often, openly, with everybody, loses its charm.

If there is something which you treasure as a gem, you won't just put it out in public. Your imitation diamonds may be scattered all over the table, but your true diamonds go into the safe. You don't even show them to people unless you know the person is very close to you and

serious and sincere in knowing what it is. That is why, with anything you revere - something you treasure more than your own life - you just don't place it out that easily.

So that is why the mantrams are kept hidden. Because they are sacred, they are secret too. That is why even certain experiences, such as spiritual dreams, are not to be told to everybody. Some people will say, "Oh, sure, you saw God." And then the min-

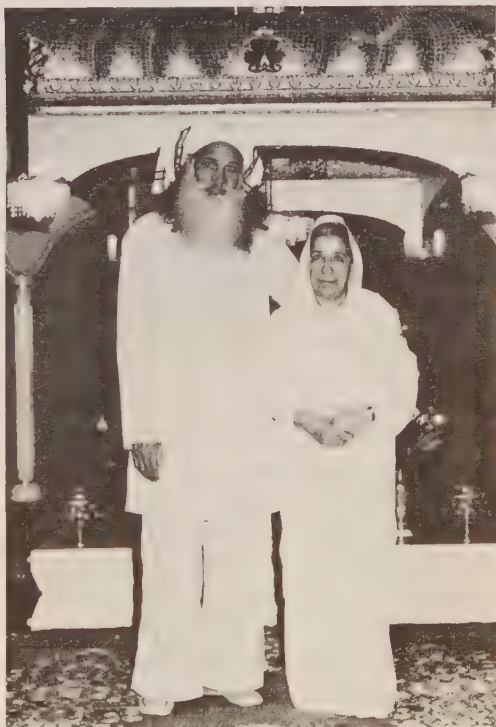
ute they walk away they will say to their friends, "Is he serious?"

So don't tell these things to such people because they will discourage you. They will laugh at you. If there is something sacred, if someone can appreciate it, it is fine. Otherwise, no. Nothing will go wrong if you repeat or chant the mantram, but not all the people will know the greatness of it. For that reason you are asked to keep it sacred.

In Memory of Devi Harilela

The beloved Mother of the Hong Kong Harilela family, Devi Harilela, passed away peacefully on November 12, 1975. She was a great and noble soul whose life was dedicated to the service of mankind and the love of God. She was an inspiration to all who knew her. It was very fitting that she spent her last moments resting in the arms of our beloved Swamiji, whom she revered so much. For many years Swamiji has been treated as one of the Harilela family members, as well as their guru.

The members of Satchidananda Ashram and the Integral Yoga Institutes convey their deepest sympathy to the Harilela family for their great loss. Our sincere prayers are with them for the peace of her soul and for the entire family.



Swamiji with Devi Harilela.

The Meaning of the Gita



by **Swami Sivananda**

The problems that face the human being are essentially the same in all periods of time, though they appear in different garbs at different times. The greatness of the Gita lies in the fact that it is an integral gospel, a solution of all problems, in all their aspects, and under all circumstances.

The Gita was pronounced by the integral person, Krishna, who represented the True Being; the Gita was an instruction to Arjuna, who represented the true man! The problems which faced Arjuna face mankind in general; the Gita is the answer to the question of life as a whole.

All problems - social, physical, intellectual and spiritual - are offshoots of certain fundamental difficulties which appear to make existence a scene of acute restlessness and grief.

Peace and happiness are the factors which control the value of life; the lack of these becomes the source of a severe want and problem; the continuous presence of these overcomes all forms of sorrow.

The basic error, the Gita

points out, is the ignorance of the main cause of all the problems that obstruct the establishment of oneself in a ceaseless satisfaction.

The Transcendental Subject

The Gita points to the fact that the Soul of the universe is not what is perceived by man through his senses or thought of by his mind, but the presupposition of conception, perception, and all knowledge that man professes to generate or possess.

The God of the universe is the heart thereof, the Transcendental Subject without an object, which means that problems arise in objectivating the true Subject, ie, the God within man.

In order to know the world fully, the knower must be independent of the laws governing the world; else, complete knowledge would be impossible. One whose knowledge is controlled by external phenomena can never have knowledge of them. The impulse for absolute knowledge guarantees the possibility of such a knowledge.

This shows that the knower is

superior to the known to such an extent that the known loses its value of being in the light of the absoluteness of the knower. The Gita stresses the existence of this state of the Supreme Being to the exclusion of everything else, in the statement, "Other than Me, nothing is."

The Fundamental Error

To try to find absolute perfection in the world, therefore, is to attempt the impossible - for that is possible only in "attaining Me" (in the words of Krishna), in attaining, or rather in being, the absolute knower whose knowledge is not of anything except himself. To become Krishna is to become the Absolute Being, where alone is happiness in unalloyed essence.

The repeated assertions made in the Gita to the effect that doubts, problems, and worries are overcome in the attainment of God, make it clear that the riddle of life can be finally solved on arriving at the knowledge that the fundamental error is the attribution of reality and selfhood to thought forms and that true perfection is being rooted in the consciousness of the Absolute Selfhood.

Rational Knowledge

The modern man opines himself to be scientific and strictly rational. The Gita warns man that science and rational knowledge are simply laws and knowledge of the forms of external experience, which by no means are valid by themselves. They are valid only insofar as they are related to an experiencing

phenomenal subject, but they are invalid to the Noumenal Subject which is the heart of even the known forms of experience.

Experience is not prior but posterior to Self-consciousness. Hence, all experience in the world is the outcome of the ideas given rise to by consciousness in the capacity of the knowing subject which it essentially is. The phenomenon should vanish in the Noumenon which is the root-experience. Until this is achieved, no problem can be solved, no pain can be allayed. The great modern problems are a trifle to the Gita which considers worldly wisdom as a fool's paradise.

The Way of Life

The way of life to be lived in order to reach absolute perfection is pointed out by the ethics of the Gita itself. It is the calming of the passions, creative willing, and the cessation of all psychic functions, that lead to a merging in Self-consciousness where alone is real knowledge, true wisdom.

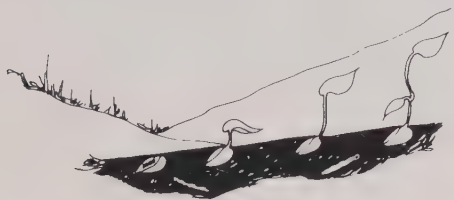
The world is the special mode of the conception and the perception of the Absolute by the functions of ideation or creative imagining. The cessation of such functions is liberation from all problems and possession of life in infinite peace. This is the supreme word of the Gita.

Sri Swami Sivananda, the spiritual Master of Sri Swamiji, was the founder of the Divine Life Society, and was dedicated to the service of humanity. He left the physical body in 1963.

Look Up at a Star

by Anandi Friendlich

near and far
wherever you go
wherever you are
the secrets of the world wait for you!



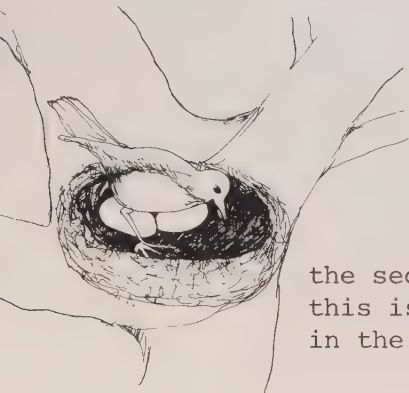
here is a seed.
it is beginning to grow.
it grows swiftly toward the sun.
it leaves the dark, quiet earth.

and now it is a flower.

the secret of the earth is the seed.
the secret of the seed is the flower.



up in the tree in a nest
a robin has just laid an egg.
this egg has a secret!



it is a baby robbin!

the secret of the egg is the baby.
this is one of the most wonderful secrets
in the world.

there are other secrets, too.
there are many other secrets.

do you know that the cocoon
fastened to the tree trunk
has a secret?

it is the butterfly.



the bud on the bare grey branch
of the winter tree
has a secret too.

it is a green leaf.

even the acorn has a secret!
it is the great oak.



what is the nightingale's secret?

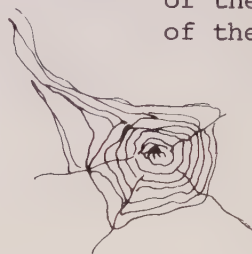
the silkworm's secret is
her silk.

the spider's secret is
her web.



what is the secret of the cow?
of the hen?
of the bee?

her song.



does the bright day have a secret?
yes. it is the moon and the stars.
the dark night has a secret too!
it is the sun.

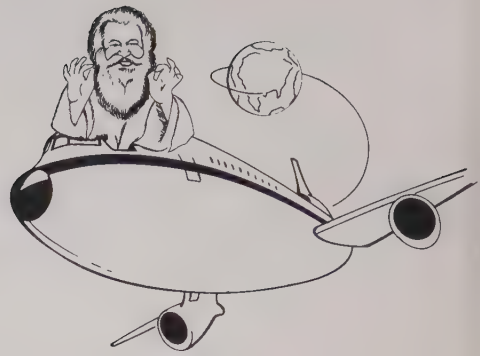
have you ever stopped to think
that even
the city street
has a secret?
it is the earth beneath it.

and what of the sea?
can you guess its secret?

near and far
up and down
under the water
inside an egg
outside in space
wherever you go
wherever you are
the secrets of the world wait for you!



News of Swamiji



VEGETARIAN CONGRESS

The University of Maine was the "humaine" host for the 1975 meeting of the World Vegetarian Congress, which brought together vegetarians from almost every country in the world. This was a milestone in the history of vegetarianism - as it was the first time since the founding of the International Vegetarian Union (I.V.U.) in 1908 that the Congress has been held in North America. This was due largely to the dedicated efforts of Mr. Jay Vinshah, President of the North American Vegetarian Society.

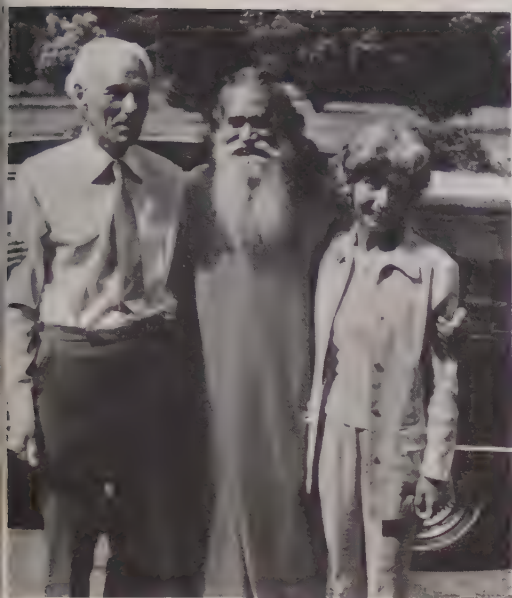
There were 1500 delegates who came from all over the world for the week-long series of programs. They came to exchange ideas, and to listen to persons such as Dr. Ralph Bircher, of the world famous Bircher-Benner Clinic in Switzerland, Muni Sushil Kumar, leader of the World Fellowship of Religions, Dr. Ann Wigmore, Scott and Helen Nearing, and many others.

Another of the speakers at the Congress was Swami Amritananda Ma, M.D., who runs Satchidananda Clinic. She and Daya Marcus not only spoke to the delegates but also gave Hatha yoga classes each morning to literally hundreds of people. They were inspired by the vitality and the astonishing physi-

cal and mental beauty of the participants, many of whom were over 60 years old.

Because of the reception that Swami Amritananda had received, Swamiji came to the Congress in the latter half of the week. He gave two scheduled lectures for all the delegates, and as a result of these talks he was invited by Shrimati Rukmini Arundale, former member of the Indian Parliament and by Dr. Gordon Latto, President of the I.V.U. as well as the Great Britain Vegetarian Society, to give a special informal talk to the other guest speakers.

The Congress was a tremendous success, and is a major step in bringing vegetarian consciousness to this continent. We are sure it will bring many positive results. For us, some of the positive results were in making many new friends, some of whom came to Satchidananda Ashram after the Congress was over. We were especially pleased to have Drs. Gordon and Barbara Latto as our guests for several days. They are remarkable people, and gave an inspiring satsang for the whole family while they were here. We hope that in the future these ties of friendship and common concern will grow stronger and stronger.



Swamiji with Drs. Gordon and Barbara Latto at the Ashram.

This past fall saw Swamiji, as always, giving service in a very concentrated way. It would be impossible to tell about all of his activities and the many relationships to which he gives his time and energy, but perhaps the following description of two weekends will give some idea at least of his constant service.

TWO WEEKENDS

On Friday, September 12, Swamiji visited the Aquarius Yoga Center in Harlem. As he himself said, later in the evening, he was "simply bathed in the love" of the brothers and sisters at Aquarius. As a result, he was a little late for his scheduled talk at Columbia University. But it didn't matter. In a rare evening, Swamiji talked for several hours to a large audience, composed of many old devotees and many newcomers alike. Probably

because of the energy of Aquarius, the evening was so spirited that at the end it seemed as if only an hour had passed.

On the next two days Swamiji spoke at a weekend conference called MECCA, devoted to the realization of consciousness. It was held at Tombrock College in New Jersey, and was organized by Lee Lozowick and Fred A. Stahl, Ph.D. Swamiji was invited to speak on Saturday evening and again on Sunday afternoon.

In addition to the Mecca program, Swamiji visited the Montclair Montessori School on Sunday morning, where he met with members of the Hindu temple group and the IYIs. And that evening, he gave a talk sponsored by the Yoga Life Club at Rutgers University.

Two weeks later, on September 25, Swamiji returned to New York, to meet with Rabbi Gelberman, an old friend. They gave their annual "Swami and Rabbi" program to an appreciative audience at the Universalist Church.

The next day Swamiji flew to Canada, to give a public lecture in downtown Montreal. And on the following day, the 27th, he stayed at the IYI in Montreal and gave two interviews, one a radio interview, and the other a taping for T.V. Concordia.

That afternoon, he flew to Ottawa, where he spoke at the University of Ottawa, as arranged by Dr. Makow, a research scientist for the Canadian government. Afterward, he was joined by about 30 people for dinner and talk late into the night at Dr. Makow's.

HONORED GUESTS

Also here at the Ashram, we and Swamiji were honored by some visits from old acquaintances and friends. Eric Doornekamp, a charming and high-spirited man from New Zealand (Swamiji said he represented the New Zealand of that land), spoke to us one afternoon about the growth of Yoga in his country.

Also, as special guests, we had Sri S.N. Kapoor and his wife, who stayed with us for several days and who almost immediately became members of the family. Mr. Kapoor is an old friend of the Divine Life Society of Rishikesh, and in fact has the honor of being the only householder who is on its Board of Trustees. He has served the DLS for many years, taking upon himself the vital work of distributing the written works of Master Sivananda all over the world.

The Ashram has also been fortunate to receive weekly visits from Mani Thirumalaisamy, who lives in Boston. She has come each Sunday to teach both Indian cooking and the Tamil language, Swamiji's native tongue, to the family.

This past fall, Swamiji went to South America, and a special account of this trip has been written by Shanthi Zupan, who accompanied him. Following this are accounts of Swamiji's visit to the U.N. and to Florida. And as these accounts are written, Swamiji is once again traveling to India, accompanied by 30 of his devotees. In the next issue we will tell you all about it.

SOUTH AMERICA

A few years ago a young girl named Pamela Serafin in Venezuela was reading spiritual books and feeling the call to lead a more spiritual life. She met Margarita Viana (a native Venezuelan who now lives in New York), and discovered that Margarita knew Swami Satchidananda.

From that moment on, Pamela planned and worked for over two years to bring into reality their common dream of bringing Swamiji to the peoples of Venezuela. When Swamiji stepped off the plane in Caracas on October 1st, it was his first trip to South America - and the first time that Pamela and the sea of shining faces were meeting him.

In the mountainous village of Colonia Tovar, Swamiji stayed at the home of artist Maria Theresa. She was visibly moved by Swamiji's presence in her home and the peace he created there. As he was leaving, she asked him if she could give him one of her paintings. Swamiji smiled and said, "I already have one, here in my pocket."

She wondered which of her paintings was small enough to fit in a pocket, when Swamiji mischievously brought out a perfect color Polaroid replica of a painting of a Mother and Child that had been in his room. "I just love those faces - so I decided to take them with me."

In addition, however, Maria Theresa did give Swamiji one of her paintings - a beautiful landscape - which Swamiji took back to the Ashram in Connecticut.



Swamiji with devotees in Venezuela; second from left, standing: Pamela Serafin with her son Benjy; second from right, standing: Sister Milla; at far right in front: Margarita Viana.

A friend of Maria Theresa's, also named Maria Theresa, requested to speak with Swamiji. The doctors had told her she had only two months to live, as she was dying of cancer. When I went to tell Swamiji it was time for the evening lecture, he turned to her and said, "Now repeat to me the things you should do."

"Oh Swamiji, you said that I should become a strict vegetarian, fast one day a week, leave off stimulants like coffee and tea and do pranayama at least 3 times a day."

"And don't forget the saunas; take one at least once or twice a week to get rid of the toxins."

"Yes, Swamiji, I will. Thank you so much. I am going to come and see you at your ashram in the spring." This coming from a woman with supposedly only two months to live.

Swamiji continued, "Yes, you don't have to die. You do what the doctors tell you, but you

don't need to listen when they say you have only two months to live. Just put that out of your mind. Do these things, say 'I am going to live'... and you will!"

In Caracas, Swamiji spoke at the Instituto Americano de Cultura Fisica Internacional and at the Central University of Venezuela to very warm and receptive audiences. Venezuela being one of the world's major oil producing countries, Swamiji took the opportunity to compare the refining of crude oil with the purification of the mind in spiritual life. And Swamiji touched each heart with his Spanish language, "*Mi amigos, amor y bendiciones a todos.*" ("My friends, love and blessings to you all.") Swamiji stayed at the home and Yoga center of a beautiful soul, Monique Medou. After his departure, she wrote how much of a blessing she had felt it had been to have him there.

Back in Colonia Tovar, he was taken to the ceramic studio run by Godfried and Tekla Zielke. They invited him to try throwing a pot on the potter's wheel. What followed was a spontaneous happening. With what seemed like no effort at all, he threw two pots on the first two tries.

The shop filled with people hypnotized by the beauty of the moment. Swamiji was so serenely concentrated that everyone was drawn into the experience. And afterward, Swamiji remarked on what a beautiful craft this was.

Swamiji gave two more talks there in Colonia Tovar, one at the mountainside home of Pamela and Enrico Serafin and another at the Hotel Selva Negri. Then he left the next day for the city of Valencia, where he was hosted by Sister Milla, a devotee of Swami Krishnananda of the Divine Life Society.

Throughout the trip, our beloved Margarita traveled with Swamiji and served as interpreter. During this trip we had lost one of Swamiji's important papers, and he and Margarita went to the airport to see if it had been dropped there when we had arrived in the country.

After asking virtually everyone, we were about to leave when one girl, Mitzi, offered to check one more time. Ten minutes later she came back with the document. We were all happy and Swamiji told her, "You have really been so helpful. I'll give you anything. Just tell me what you want."

During this time, all of her co-workers had gathered around



Swamiji "throwing" a pot.

Swamiji, asking him questions about himself and Yoga. So Mitzi immediately said, "We would love to hear you give a talk."

Even though Swamiji was scheduled to leave the next day, he postponed the trip and they arranged a talk. It was a very beautiful session and it became obvious why the document had been lost in the first place! At the end, one woman was heard saying, "He is talking perfect Catholicism, and without saying anything or anyone else is bad. I have never heard a person talk like that in my whole life."

As Swamiji was about to drive off, a young boy held on to his arm at the car window and said slowly, in careful English, "Mister, I want to be like you."

UNITED NATIONS

This past fall marked the 30th anniversary of the U.N. On this occasion, the Temple of Understanding - a group working for the harmony of mankind - held a Spiritual Summit Conference. For the entire week of October 19-24 this Conference was held at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, bringing together spiritual leaders of almost every religion of the world.

It was a very inspired and inspiring work, attended by many thousands of people. In addition, a panel of leaders met each day to prepare a Joint Statement to be presented to the U.N. on its 30th anniversary.

Dr. Ewart Cousins, Conference Coordinator and a great Ecumenical-minded soul, invited Swamiji to speak during the week, and so, as part of the week's program, Swamiji gave a beautiful talk at the Cathedral on the night of October 23.

Later the same evening the Temple of Understanding held a dinner at the Waldorf Astoria in honor of the U.N.'s 30th anniversary. Attending were people of all walks of life who felt inspired to support the work of the United Nations.

The evening ended with the Ceremony of Light. From one central candle, a representative of each of the five major religions lit candles and offered a prayer. From there the light went out to the candles held by everyone and within a few minutes the room was transformed from darkness to a blaze of golden light.

As Swamiji was preparing to

leave, he was requested to come into a private room where an interview was being conducted with chief organizer Judith Hollister and an American Indian sage, Lame Deer. Swamiji was asked to join them and the three sat for almost an hour, holding hands and talking softly. Every once in a while, Swamiji and Lame Deer would look into each other's eyes with great love and understanding. It was an incredible experience for the few people who were privileged to witness the interchange.

The following morning of October 24 saw a unique event within the walls of the U.N. As the culmination of the week-long program, the spiritual leaders gathered there to honor this great organization. After an opening meditation, the United Nations Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, gave a warm welcome. Dr. Cousins then introduced speakers representing each of the world's five major faiths.

Each one spoke inspiringly of their tradition and its understanding of the essential unity of man. Perhaps most moving of all was Mother Theresa of Calcutta, who represented the Christian faith. Her message and the example of her life were that of seeing the Divine Lord in each face and of going forth to serve in that way.

As she spoke of the work she does in relieving the suffering of the poor in India, she told of a woman whom she had recently taken out of the streets and put into her hospital. As the dying woman thanked her, she realized that that woman had



U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim welcoming spiritual leaders from all of the world's major faiths at the concluding program.

given her so much more than she could give her.

As she sat down, half the people in the room had tears in their eyes, moved by her simple truth. Afterward, Swamiji greeted her with great love and recognition. And later, in private, he spoke of her saintly qualities.

The day's conclusion came when Dr. Jean Houston, the Conference Chairperson, read the Joint Statement. It was a brief, beautifully written message that began by praising the work of the U.N., in its efforts to deal with world-wide problems. It put forth the idea of a "Spiritual United Nations," suggesting perhaps a greater tapping of the

resource of spiritually elevated beings of the earth, who have that universal vision, in solving these universal problems. Afterward, Swamiji's very dear friend, Br. David Steindl-Rast, O.S.B., gave a closing prayer.

Whether or not there is ever a Spiritual United Nations is a question which can only be answered by the future. But each person who came into that room left with an increased hope for mankind. In this age of world-wide cataclysm, it is at least hopeful that for the first time, at the meeting point of the governments of all nations, the spiritual leaders of the world have come together to offer their hope, support and vision.

FLORIDA

On October 25, Swamiji flew to Miami, and was met at the airport by Sri Raam Austen, Mithra Newman and about 30 devotees.

The next morning Swamiji gave a talk at The Roundtable of the Light Centers Conference. It was this group which had sponsored Swamiji's visit, and prior to this talk Swamiji met with Stan Goudreau, Program Chairman, Morry Cuttler, President, and other members. They are doing fine work in bringing together different groups in their area.

On stage, talking on "Yoga and Integration" to a large audience, Swamiji touched many people with his inspiring words and his radiant presence.

Later that afternoon, Sri Raam drove Swamiji to the University of Miami Marine Biology Lab, where they were met by Dr. Sonny Gruber, an authority on

sharks. He is conducting studies to determine what can be done to deter shark attacks on humans. Swamiji told about a primitive tribe that still uses certain sound vibrations to ward off sharks from their waters.

In the lab, Swamiji walked across a narrow board above the pool of sharks. Dr. Gruber then picked up one of the sharks and Swamiji rubbed its stomach as the fish lay calmly before him. Swamiji said that the training of the sharks is like training the spiritual seeker, making us feel that the Master's love must be as precise and patient as the scientist's.

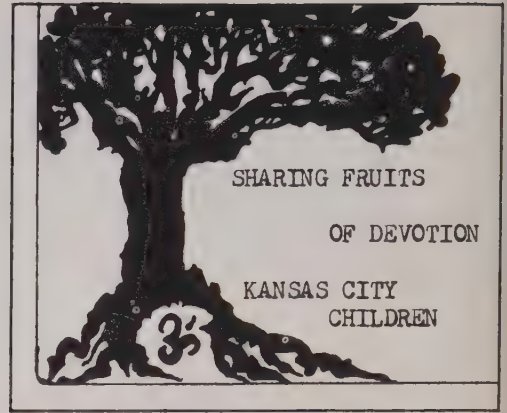
That evening, Swamiji gave a talk at the Coconut Grove Center, arranged by Sri Raam. And the next morning, just before leaving the Sunshine State, he went to the Sunshine Yoga Center, run by Sri Raam, touring the facilities and blessing the Center.



Swamiji meeting Stan Goudreau, Morry Cuttler and Laren Bright.



May we grow to be
like You Papa. We love You.
-Your N.J. Babes



*We celebrate this day for you
But then, it's something other too,
You have no birth as we all know
In us your seeds you sow.
May this day be everyday
Blooming right within.*

*So Father let us praise Your Name
Today and evermore
Into that realm of Peace and Bliss
You've come to be our door.*

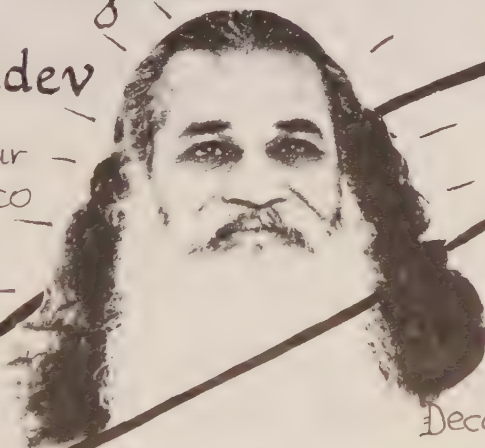
*Happy Jayanthi Beloved Gurudev
Your Dallas Children*



★
Happy Jayanthi!

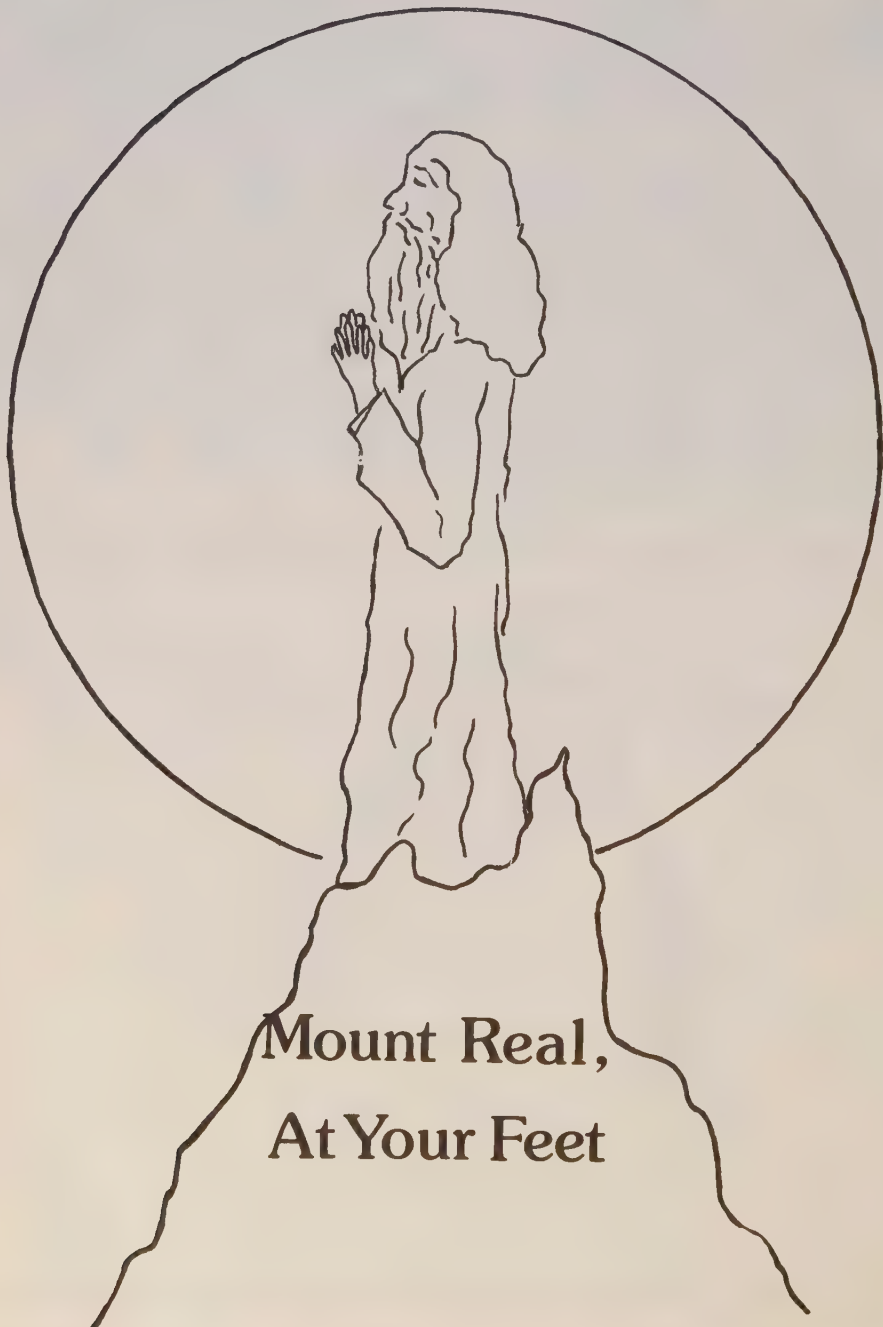
★ Gurudev

from your
San Francisco
children



December 22, the
winter solstice, marks
the beginning of longer days and shorter
nights. Day by day the sun gives our little planet
more light, more warmth, more love. Daily the darkness
and ignorance withdraw from the rays of divine radiance.

Joyeux Jayanthi!



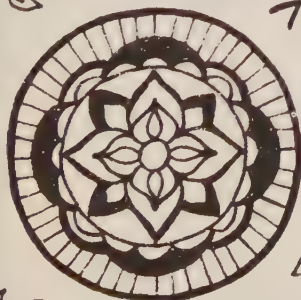
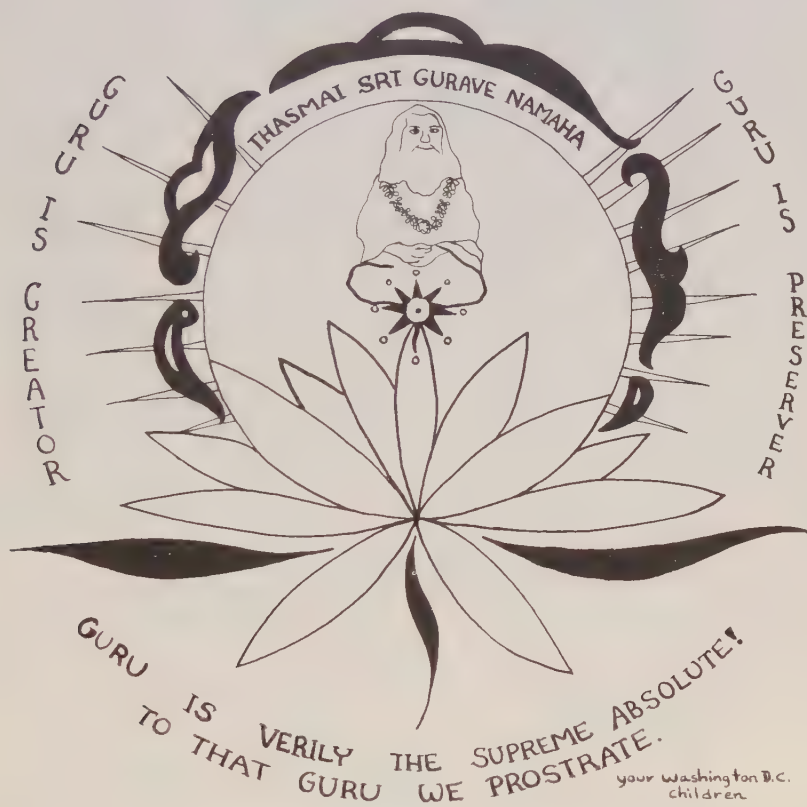
Mount Real,
At Your Feet



OM NAMO BHAGAVATE
SATCHIDANANDA!

IN YOU WE HAVE TAKEN OUR
REBIRTH
HAPPY JAYANTHI!

YOUR CHILDREN IN LOS ANGELES



The Christ-Light waits in the hearts
of the earth ~ Angels of Love
all hover near ~ The new sun
celebrates it's birth as a spark
in the midnight of the year.
Gurudev, may your Christhood be
born in our hearts ~ Love from Detroit

Happy Jayanti!



N.Y. IYI

ॐ

May He the Supreme One protect us both
 May He bestow upon us the fruits of wisdom
 May we obtain energy to acquire knowledge
 May our intellect grow ever more bright
 May we cherish no ill feeling toward each other.

Happy Jayanthi
Beloved Papa
 Your Boston Children

Happy Jayanthi
Guru Dev!

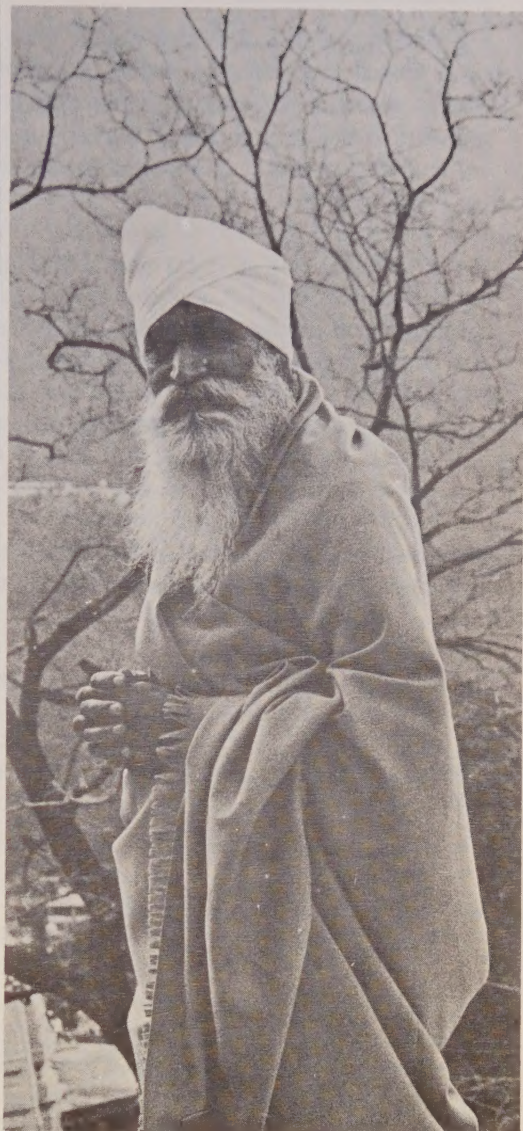


Love,

Your New Britain Children

*Through You, we've discovered
 a smile on our face
 and a
 glow in our heart*

Happy Jayanthi
Your Iowa children



*And it shall be my endeavor
 to reveal thee in my
 actions,
 knowing it is thy power
 gives me strength to act.*

Tagore

Satchidananda Ashram
Family ॐ

Letters

Being here, living with you, has been one of the most significant months of this life. Your generosity in so many ways has been, at times, overwhelming to me.

I shall carry you each in my heart wherever I go and hope you will, from time to time, have me in your thoughts and prayers.

Om Shanthi
C.H.

The following poem and letter of appreciation comes from India.

LIVE LONG, LIVE LONG, LOVELY SOUL,
Thou art Truth-Knowledge-Bliss,
Living for the joy of all -
How great is Thy service.

We read with pride Thy message,
We speak of Thy glory,
We send Thee sincere homage -
Hail Integral Yogi!

We in India are proud of your achievements in the U.S.A. Your Integral Yoga movement is a blessing to humanity. Your spiritual service shall go into the history of humanity. The harmonious synthesis of Science and Yoga, West and East, is the need of today. I am happy to see that you have done this. You have a large following, a ready response, and a vast achievement.

The soul of Sivananda shall be pleased with you.

Prosper Noble Soul,
Kavi Yogi Suddhananda Bharati
Madras, India

After the Vegetarian Congress this past summer (see p. 20), we received the following letter.

Swami Satchidananda
Satchidananda Ashram

Dear Friend,

A Meateater, thanks to the kind invitation of his brother, explored the strange country of vegetarianism and discovered as a fringe benefit the Yoga literature table manned by two of your very beautiful disciples. They were infinitely patient with my callous and cynical inquiries, as a result of which I ended up in their camp and Yoga sessions. Their preciousness increased with daily acquaintance.

Though I'm a forlorn pacifist and long time follower of Mahatma Gandhi, I probably would have skipped your lecture at the Congress had not your two students urged us to attend. I'm glad I crowded into the small room. I followed you with enjoyment and some sorely needed confirmation of the infinite value of Peace.

I hope to hold on to what I took away from the campus of the University of Maine and move toward Yoga and vegetarianism. Hope my wife and I can visit and make friends at West 13th Street when we get back to our city address.

With all best wishes
E.G.

Dearest Gurudev,

Hi! Loving salutations to my most beloved Master. Nataraja and I are getting a-bit excited around the edges here, as I know that soon you will be here again.

I've been busy here with Nivritti. There are no other children near here, so I'm No. 1 pal.

The pictures I enclosed were taken around Nivritti's 3rd birthday. Since he was just barely 2, he started imitating Nataraja doing his asanas in the morning. Just as you said, you don't have to teach; they must imitate and follow.

Nivritti, though, sometimes gets frustrated and he might cry a little. He was anxious to do Nataraj asana and couldn't balance. But one day he was so happy as he showed me this asana I don't know if it is an exact asana, but for Nivritti it is.



Last Christmas, some friends, two children, received these super-hero dolls, Superman, Batman, Spiderman, and the super-foes, the Joker, the Penguin, and the Riddler. They are all 10 inches with fully jointed bodies.

Well, the two little boys were playing the usual "good guy and bad guy" game. Meanwhile, on the side, Nivritti is doing his own thing with his doll. After a while, the other two boys became curious and asked what he was doing, and Nivritti said Batman was doing asanas.

There he was, twisting old Batman into the bow pose. This looked mighty interesting and Nivritti did some more simple asanas, and soon the other two boys were twisting their dolls into Yoga postures.

Well, before you knew it of course, the little boys had to see if *their* bodies could do that too, and they were all trying to do the bow pose. And they did it really well. And it was so good to see that Batman and crew were "coming up" in the world. As it turned out, I got Nivritti a Batman and Spiderman for his birthday and today we may have to get him another one. He twisted old Spiderman into so many asanas these past months that Spiderman "snapped."

Well, soon we'll be seeing you.

Your loving child,
J.R.

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